

State Representative **Tom Kromkowski**



Session Report



- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Daylight-Saving Time
- ☒ New Voter ID Legislation
- ☒ Education Issues

INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools

will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by five percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.

Daylight-Saving Time

Much of the media attention this session focused on Daylight-Saving Time (DST). As the result of legislation the General Assembly approved only by very close votes, most of Indiana will observe Eastern Daylight-Saving Time beginning next April. This will mean St. Joseph County will be an hour ahead of Chicago and other Northwest Indiana counties all year long and will cause residents who work in LaPorte, Porter, and Lake counties to return home an hour later next spring and summer when this law takes effect.

I received numerous letters, emails, telephone calls, and legislative questionnaire responses on this topic. The majority of constituents who contacted me on the issue were opposed to Daylight-Saving Time and were overwhelmingly in favor of Indiana being placed in the Central Time Zone. For all the above reasons, I voted "NO" on DST.

The legislation requires the governor to petition the U.S. Department of Transportation to hold hearings to deter-

mine the appropriate time zone in which Indiana should be placed. Even though the governor expressed a clear desire last fall that he preferred the Central Time Zone, he has now reversed course and asked for the hearings without stating a preference. Citizens may express their views on time zone matters by contacting the following:



Rep. Kromkowsky speaks to legislators on the House floor during the debate over Daylight-Saving Time.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Norman Mineta, Secretary
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001
Telephone: 202-366-4000
Email: dot.comments@ost.dot.gov

Voter ID Proposal a Flawed Reform Approach

You might have heard that the General Assembly passed a partisan plan to require individuals to **show photo identification in order to vote on Election Day.**

Upon first glance, this sounds like a good idea. Present your driver's license and you can vote. Who couldn't meet that requirement?

People who live at nursing homes and no longer drive, for one. Women who have married and changed their names, because their driver's licenses will not match their voter registration files. Minorities who have had to face many barriers in the past to their efforts to vote.

The idea has been sold as a way to eliminate fraud and restore honesty to the electoral process. **What advocates for the bill have failed to tell you is that this bill will surely deny some Hoosiers the right to vote.**

Consider the cases of electoral fraud that have occurred in recent years in Indiana. They all have involved absentee ballots, and this legislation fails to address that issue. As the majority party advanced this proposal, it did not provide a single instance where electoral fraud in Indiana has occurred at a polling site.

This legislation has several major flaws, and a court challenge already has been launched to determine if it violates basic principles of the Indiana Constitution.



Rep. Kromkowski debates legislation on the House floor.

Fighting Crime

Senate Bill 164 will require a person convicted of possession of child pornography with a prior conviction for the same offense to register as a sex offender.

House Bill 1057 makes it a Class C infraction for a person in the passenger compartment of a motor vehicle to possess an alcoholic beverage container that has been opened, has a broken seal or from which some of the contents have been removed.

House Bill 1099 will make the offense of voyeurism a Class D felony instead of a Class B misdemeanor if a person is convicted of the offense a subsequent time.

Senate Bill 525 authorizes the state to seek a sentence of life imprisonment without parole for a person who commits a Class A felony constituting a sex offense against a child and who also has a prior unrelated Class A felony conviction for a sex offense against a child.

Inspector General

Fraud and corruption in state government will be investigated by an inspector general created through a new state law approved in 2005. Thanks to changes championed by House Democrats, this inspector will work with locally-elected prosecutors and judges to look into charges of wrongdoing and determine whether to proceed with criminal charges.

Alternate Fuels

Whenver possible, state government vehicles will be required to run on agriculture-based fuels, such as biodiesel, ethanol or gasohol.

Reorganizing Government

Indiana now has a state Department of Agriculture and Office of Rural Affairs, as well as a Department of Homeland Security.

Firefighters

Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians will not be penalized by their employers for being absent when they are responding to emergency calls.

Contact

Representative

**Tom
Kromkowski**



Rep. Kromkowski listens
in a committee meeting.

Office:

1-800-382-9842

Address:

200 W. Washington St
Indianapolis IN 46204

Online:

H7@in.gov
www.in.gov/H7

*Sign-up on my website
to receive email updates*

Education Issues Update

A number of important education bills were approved this session, but I think the most important measure affecting our children was the state budget. As I discuss in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter, the new budget will shortchange many schools and force them to eliminate programs and lay off teachers, factors that will hurt our children's ability to get a quality education.

**Here are
other major education measures
passed in 2005:**

Starting in the 2010-11 school year, **students will have to complete the Core 40 curriculum in order to graduate.** Core 40 requires students to receive credits in a series of advanced courses,

including English and language arts, math, science, social studies and foreign languages.

Other education bills will **change the enrollment date for kindergarten to August 1 from July 1**, require schools to adopt rules to prohibit bullying, and provide daily

opportunities for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence. The state Board of Education will be required to set up cheerleading safety standards and guidelines.



Rep. Kromkowski discusses legislation with Rep. Paul Robertson.

Several proposals were defeated, including plans to move the ISTEP-plus test to the spring and revive the school voucher program.



**Starting in 2010, Indiana
students will have to complete
the Core 40 to graduate**

Representative Tom Kromkowski

200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis IN 46204

Prst Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Indiana
House of
Representatives